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The blue bird

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# THE BLUE BIRD

SOUVENIR BOOK

PQ  
2625  
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"THE BLUE BIRD FOR HAPPINESS"



NINETEEN HUNDRED AND TWELVE





**"MYTYL" AND "TYLTYL"**  
**THE WOODCUTTER'S CHILDREN**



THE SCENES  
OF  
"THE BLUE BIRD"

OUT of all the myriads of birds that fly through the sky there is one bird, blue as the sky itself, and this bird, the fairies tell us, brings to its possessor that which is most desired—in fact, it is the secret of happiness. It is more difficult to catch than any butterfly you ever saw, and just when you are surest of being able to lay your hands on it you are quite likely to find that it is far away.

Mortals know very little about the Blue Bird, except that once you have seen its fluttering wings ahead of you, you must keep on following it as long as you live. Tytyl and Mytyl, the Woodcutter's children, were told about "the bird that is blue" by the Fairy Bèrylune, who looked, somehow, very like Neighbor Berlingot.

The Neighbor's little girl was sick; nerves, the doctors called it, but the Fairy realized that all the little girl needed was the Blue Bird of Happiness. So she hobbled in on Christmas Eve, and sent Tytyl and Mytyl to search the world over until they should find the marvelous bird that was to cure the little sick girl.

Of all the sights they saw and the things they did on this wondrous quest we are told in a play called after the bird itself; and if you like fairy adventures you had better ask the one among all your relatives who tells the nicest stories, and seems generally to understand the really interesting things in life, to take you to the play, where you will actually see what happened to Tytyl and Mytyl when they left their bed on a snowy night to go journeying after the Blue Bird.

This little book will give you some idea of what you will see there, and the pictures may help you to recognize some of the queer characters—or to remind you of them after you have got home. This is the Fairy.



THE "FAIRY BÉRYLUNE" AND THE LITTLE GREEN HAT



## SCENE 1

### THE WOODCUTTER'S COTTAGE

The first time you see Tytyl and Mytyl they are fast asleep in bed on Christmas Eve. You know at once from the room where their bed is that they are among those fortunate children who own the whole house and are able to watch all the fascinating things that so often occur in rooms where children are not made welcome.

Over in the corner is the huge fireplace where Mummy Tyl cooks all the family meals, and against the wall is the dresser containing both cooking utensils and table dishes. The great bread-bowl and milk-jug and sugar-bucket are conveniently at hand, and in the corner near the fire is a tall barrel under the pump. It looks as if it would be perfectly fascinating to climb into that barrel some day when no one was looking, work the pump handle vigorously and give one's self and one's clothes a thoroughly delightful shower bath—only, of course, one wouldn't choose Christmas Eve, when the water is sure to be cold.

As soon as you have discovered what an interesting place this cottage living room is, you find that the children have waked up, the Fairy has come in, told them that as she really can't do without the Blue Bird, they must set out at once to find it for her; and, best of all, furnished them with the magic diamond that is more useful than the strongest microscope that ever was invented, for just one turn will enable the children to see things as they really are inside, even down to the bottoms of their souls. And, of course, when the diamond is turned, *you* can see all those things, too.

It would take far too long to tell what everything in that room is really like when Tytyl has turned the diamond. Even when you see it you can scarcely

look fast enough from one wonder to another. The walls glow and twinkle like opals in the sun, the clock doors open and out trip the laughing, dancing Hours, not a laggard among them, you may besure.



"FIRE"



Fire comes leaping out of the chimney, and Water wells up out of the barrel, and they fly about after each other in a curious whirling sort of dance, trying to put each other out, like the natural enemies they are.



“WATER”

Bread rolls out of the bread bowl and careens about the room, but although he is very pompous and substantial looking I am glad to say he does not prove to be half so reliable and necessary a friend to man as mothers and nurses have always led us to suppose. Bread has a useful sort of stomach, from which he can cut a good slice whenever the children are hungry enough to want it.

Sugar's chief charm lies in his hands, the fingers of which he breaks off with a snap whenever Tyltyl and Mytyl want a bit of barley sugar to suck. New fingers grow at once, so Sugar always has nice clean hands



"BREAD"



without the trouble of washing them. Milk looks just as Mytyl describes her, "a frightened lady in a white nightgown," but she is so sweet and pure that the most careful doctor in the world could find nothing to "modify."

After Sugar and Milk have shown what they are really like, Cat and Dog wake up—I mean, really wake all the way up, so that you know all there is to be known about them. Cat soon lets us see why it is we have never fully trusted him, even when he purred most demurely. You can't help watching him, he has such fascinating ways, in spite of his treachery



"SUGAR" AND "MILK"

and his sidelong contempt of every one except himself. Dog is just as adorable in truth as he is in seeming. From the moment he leaps out of his basket and barks out his eager worship of his little master you



"TYLO," THE DOG





"TYLETTE," THE CAT

know that you have always supplied the right words for his clamorous, leaping caresses. If there were no one else in the play every one who has ever had a dog friend would be glad to have seen "The Blue Bird" because of Tytyl's funny, faithful dog Tylo.

The last wonderful thing that happens is that the lighted lamp drops down from the wall and in its place stands the soul of Light, a lovely being, as you can see from the picture, who proves a wise and true friend to the children on their daring journey. The Fairy cuts



"LIGHT"

short the revelry of the newly awakened Things and Animals and hurries them off to find the Blue Bird. She sends them through the window, so that no one shall see them getting off, and she very thoughtfully leaves some shadows in the bed, so that when Daddy and Mummy Tyl come in a moment later they suppose their boy and girl are sleeping quietly, and they go to bed themselves without a notion that their own little children are dancing up into Fairyland.

## SCENE 2

### THROUGH THE WINDOW

Meantime the children and their companions dance out through the window into the snowy forest, and you can see the outside of the little thatched cottage where Tytyl and Mytyl live, and the tall fir trees that Daddy cuts down for a living. Almost as soon as they come out they step into a cloud and you lose sight of them for a moment. Then a queer sort of emerald light begins to shine down upon them. It comes from the neighborhood of the moon, but it is not moonlight; in fact, it is the glow from the Fairy's Palace.

## SCENE 3

### THE FAIRY BERYLUNE'S PALACE

Before you know it, there they are in the Fairy's palace, somewhere a little this side of the moon. Of course, it is a palace because that is the name of it, but if it weren't for that you might think it was the inside curve of a wave of the sea. The architecture



of the walls is certainly odd. They seem to be built of filmy spheres that look as if they might be new worlds, not yet old enough to be real, and through them you can see the moon, very large and impressive, because it is so near.

It is at the Fairy Palace, while the children are dressing, that you hear the Things and Animals, instigated by the treacherous Cat, plotting against the children. But Cat is not allowed even to mention his nefarious scheme, for the faithful Dog barks out his loyal love and devotion, and declares that he will permit no harm to come to them.

The Fairy gives every one directions and other equipments for the journey, as she is not to go herself. First of all, she sends Tytyl and Mytyl by themselves to the Land of Memory, where she says they will find their grandparents and their brothers and sisters, each one of whom went away one evening and never came back.

#### SCENE 4

### THE LAND OF MEMORY

When you see the misty forest through which the children must travel to find the Land of Memory you understand just why it is so difficult to remember back to things that happened when you were much smaller. For there, in and out among the spectral trees, dance wonderful creatures who spin the mists as they dance, on purpose to befog those who are trying to follow the path of memory.

But Tytyl and Mytyl keep on trying and trying to remember, until at last they drive away the fogs and see once more the dear old faces of Gaffer and Granny Tyl. Then it is quite easy to recall how it used to be

when they went to visit them of a fine summer afternoon. Yes, there is the dear little creepered cottage, and there the tall hollyhocks, the beehives, the little old gate, and beyond it the tiny winding river, all bright with the setting sun.

It is nice to see the little brothers and sisters, the moment they are thought of, come trooping out of the cottage, and it is reassuring to hear Gaffer and Granny explain that none of them are dead—only sleeping, and that they always wake, fresh and happy, directly the living think of them.

Even Granny's black-bird, that the children have once loved, comes alive and begins to sing the moment Tytyl remembers to ask about him. The queer thing is that he has grown as "blue as a blue glass marble" there in the Land of Memory. Not so queer perhaps, when one considers that lots of things seem better when they are remembered than they really were at the time, but it seems odd just at first. Of course Tytyl begs the bird of Gaffer and Granny, and puts him in his cage for the Fairy's little girl.

Then comes a most delicious supper, served out in the pretty little cottage yard, of cabbage soup and the plum tarts that no one but Granny has ever known how to make just right. They are all so gay and noisy at the table that it seems a pity to break up the fun, but of course Tytyl must keep his promise to Light; and so off he scampers with Mytyl.

Then you see Gaffer and Granny and all the little brothers and sisters dropping asleep in their chairs. And then it gets gradually dark and misty again, and you can no longer see the beautiful Land of Memory. Somewhere through the mists you hear Mytyl asking for Light, and Tytyl's regretful little cry that Granny's Bird isn't blue any longer, and so of course you know that it can't be the bird the Fairy wants after all.

## SCENE 5

### OUTSIDE

#### THE GRAVEYARD

You next see the travelers outside a silent graveyard, where lie those who have been dead so long that no one in the world remembers them. It is not just the place one would choose to visit, particularly in the dead of night, but the Fairy has said that the Blue Bird may be hidden away in one of the tombs, and the only way to find out about it is for Tytyl to turn the magic diamond just at midnight when the dead walk. The little group before the churchyard gate seems thoroughly frightened, and small wonder it is, for even the shadows look grim, and the great dark trees meet far overhead, as if they were whispering together of all the strange sights they have seen through centuries of midnights. It isn't a bit surprising to hear Milk declare that she is "going to turn," and one does feel a little disappointed in Light when she says that Tytyl and Mytyl must go in all alone; but, of course, Light's word is law.

Dog is terribly frightened, that is clear, but he wouldn't have deserted the children, not even to save his life, if Light hadn't insisted; and after the children go through you can see the faithful creature crouching by the gate and can hear his pitiful whine.

## SCENE 6

### THE KINGDOM OF

#### THE PAST

At first you can scarcely see a thing in the churchyard, but when your eyes get accustomed to the darkness you can barely make out the tombs and crosses and gravestones that stretch on and on among the tall cypresses. Everything is so still that the very air



seems to have died, and you wonder why you ever felt curious about such things, and make up your mind never to ask another question about dying.

The church clock begins to strike, and you know that the graves are opening, opening, opening, and that in just another moment the dead will come out, and Tytyl will turn his diamond so that you will know the real truth about death. Just as you feel that you must shut up your eyes tight as Mytyl has done, you hear a faint sound, like the song of birds, or that strange music of the spheres that one has so often wondered about. It grows stronger and stronger, more and more triumphant, until finally it bursts out as a great hymn of praise, and all the while the graveyard has been changing, changing, until finally it is quite transformed into a heavenly flower-filled garden.

There are no dead, at all, not even any tombs any more, but in their place stand hundreds of tall, springing lilies, glistening with dew. Everything is quite bright, as if the skies are letting the glory through, and you feel as if you must get to your feet and stretch your arms wide, as Tytyl is doing, and cry "There are no dead!"

#### SCENE 7

### THE KINGDOM OF THE FUTURE

It is a relief to see Tytyl and Mytyl next in surroundings that are not in the least solemn. The Kingdom of the Future must be somewhere in the very heart of a mid-June sky, for nothing else could explain the intense blueness of everything there.

Even more wonderful than the place itself are the little inhabitants who throng there. They are blue, too, and you soon discover that they are the unborn

children awaiting the hour of their birth. While waiting they are enormously busy building up their future lives. Some of them are intent on the inventions and improvements they are to take to the earth with them, while others are preparing just ordinary baggage, like sicknesses and sins. The rule is that no one shall go empty handed, but each child seems free to choose what his own little box shall contain. And while Tytyl and Mytyl are visiting these odd little people you see just how it is that new babies get to the earth, for at dawn Father Time comes sailing up in a wonderful mother-of-pearl galley, with a great golden sail, to fetch all the children due to be born that day. You can see in the picture how wise he looks; and, indeed, he must be a wonderful old fellow to know just whom to take every day, because you can see the little unborns doing their best to confuse him — some eager to slip in ahead of their turns, and others who ought to go trying to lose themselves in the crowd because they are not quite ready for the great change.

When Time's galley has put off for the Earth with the day's supply of children you can hear floating up from a very great distance the glad song of the Mothers reaching up to meet their little children. You are not surprised after that to find that Light thinks it is time for the children to go back to Mummy Tyl.

It seems odd that there should have been no Blue Bird in the Palace of the Future, since everything there is blue, but as the little blue children have never learned how to cry they probably have never felt any great need of happiness. So Tytyl and Mytyl have to start home without the bird after all.

SCENE 8

THE KINGDOM  
OF MOTHER NIGHT

Under the starry dome of the sky is Night's black basalt palace. You see Mother Night herself sitting on the basalt steps between two giant black cat-sphinxes. Her robe seems like the changing clouds of the sky, with here and there a twinkling star. Everything in the palace is black—the huge pillars, the floor, the walls and even the dungeon doors behind which are locked the Terrors, Wars, Sickesses and other Evils, of which Mother Night is the guardian.

Above the steps where she is sitting are two great doors, that smoulder and glow like immense black opals. You overhear Cat plotting with Night before the children come in, and you discover that it is behind those doors that the Blue Bird lives among the dream birds that feed on the rays of the moon. Of course Night wants to keep the Blue Bird all to herself, and she and the Cat scheme to terrify the children so that they will leave without opening the great central doors. The palace is so filled with mystery and gloom that you half fear the conspirators will be successful—particularly as the doors themselves, in spite of their beauty, or perhaps because of it, seem to suggest Eternity and Infinity and all the things that are so uncomfortable to think about.

But after opening various vaults at the sides and letting out any number of odd and interesting things, from a Firefly to a Cold-in-the-Head, Tytyl does just what you would have done in his place—he chokes down his terror and opens the great smouldering doors. Then of a sudden you see a marvelous fairy



garden, with innumerable fountains throwing up sprays to the moon, and the whole air is filled with hundreds and hundreds of Blue Birds.

You see Night and Cat anxiously watching on the steps while the joyful children dash in among the Blue Birds and run off with their hands full. And after they are gone you hear Cat exultingly declare that the true Blue Bird is left up there on a moonbeam and that the children have merely carried away some of the dream birds that can only live in Night's garden.

And a moment later you see the children holding up their birds to Light, and sobbing out that they are every one dead. When Light has taken the children away you see that Mother Night can be kind to those she loves, for she comes out with a host of her Stars and, bending over the still little moon-birds, they nurse them back to life.

#### SCENE 9

### THE LAND OF HAPPINESS

As "The Land of Happiness" is revealed, we see an ineffably pure, divinely roseate, harmonious and ethereal brightness. There an immense and magnificent hall, a sort of cathedral of gladness and serenity, tall, innocent and almost transparent, whose endless fabric rests upon innumerable long and slender, limpid and blissful columns, suggesting certain old-time drawings. Light is present clad in a veil to cover herself when visiting "happy people," for there are many joys that cannot endure Light, and if they are afraid they cannot be happy. The hall soon begins to fill with angel forms that seem to be emerging from a long slumber and glide harmoniously between the columns. They are clad in shimmering dresses, of soft and subtle shades; rose-awakening, water's-

smile, amber-dew, blue-of-dawn, etc. Light explains to the wondering Tytyl and Mytyl that these are Joys, that she knows them all and that there are many more Happinesses on Earth than people think, but most men do not discover them. Now troop in the little Happinesses, frisking about and bursting with laughter. Tytyl and Mytyl wish to join the Happinesses in their merry frolic, but Light warns them that there is no time for that—childhood is so short. The Chief Happiness approaches Tytyl and Mytyl with outstretched hands but they both fail to recognize her, much to the amazement of all the others, who know that when they have returned to their home from the journey in search of the Blue Bird they will recognize all the Happinesses and learn to encourage them with a smile. The Happiness of Being Well now introduces herself, and then follow the Happiness of Pure Air, the Happiness of Summer Hours, the Happiness of Spring, the Happiness of the Sunset, the Happiness of the Rain, the Happiness of the Winter Fire, and finally the best of all, the Happiness of Innocent Thoughts.

The Happinesses express great surprise when they learn that Tytyl and Mytyl do not know where the Blue Bird is. The Great Joys now enter and are presented to the children as the Golden Joy of Being Just, the Joy of Being Good, the Joy of Thinking, the Joy of Understanding, the Joy of Seeing What is Beautiful, and in the distance, concealed almost from view, is the Joy of Loving, but Tytyl and Mytyl do not recognize her. Then is revealed the greatest Joy of all—the Joy of Mother Love. The children recognize in her some resemblance to their own mother, but they find the Joy of Mother Love much prettier and discover that she never grows old, for she is freshened and nourished by the smiles of her children, revelling in the riches gained through her

love for them.

The Joy of Mother Love wonders at the children's presence, but it is learned that Light brought them there—Light who remains veiled in fear that the Joys might be frightened if they saw too clearly. Then all the Joys rejoice that Light has come to visit them at last—they have been waiting for her so long. Her presence has created a great stir among the Joys for they have been seeking her—they cannot see beyond themselves, they cannot see beyond their shadows, they cannot see beyond their dreams. They kneel in supplication to Light to remain, but she leaves them with the hope that some day she may return without fear, without shadow.

#### SCENE 10

### THE LEAVE TAKING

Then back through the forest they go and outside the window they take leave of their companions, the Things and Animals—that is to say, of their speaking, human forms. Of course, they will all meet every day just as usual, but without the diamond Tytyl and Mytyl will not find it any easier than the rest of us do to understand the mysterious Silence of Things.

#### SCENE 11

### THE AWAKENING

After they have slipped through the window you see them asleep in the cottage living room once more, just as if they had never been out of bed at all. You see Mummy Tyl get them up for breakfast, and, best of all, there at home, when they are no longer hunting for it, they find the Blue Bird! They see that it is really blue, just as they are about to give it away, which is quite as it should be when you come to think of it. You realize what a wonderful bird it is, for the



little sick girl comes dancing in as healthy and happy as possible; and although the Blue Bird flies away in the end it is nice to know that human hands have held him even for a moment.

Of course you will not find in these pages a tenth part of the adventures of Tytyl and Mytyl. It is necessary to see the play to get the whole fairy tale; and if you happen to be the sort of child who likes to know what things mean the most sensible thing would be to ask your father or mother, or the nicest of your uncles, or each of them in turn, to take you again. Then if you still don't understand all about it you might ask them to read the pages that come after this, and to put it all into simple words for you.





MAURICE MAETERLINCK

THE AUTHOR  
OF  
"THE BLUE BIRD"

Maurice Maeterlinck was born August 29, 1862, in Ghent. The son of a "propriétaire," he was early fascinated by the peasants living about his father's farm who squatted on their heels in their doorways on summer evenings, grave, motionless, the only sign of life about them being the blue smoke that rose with rhythmic regularity from their long pipes. "There was one cottage," writes Alfred Sutro, "into which the boy would often peep on his way home from school, the home of seven brothers and one sister, all old, toothless, worn, working together in the daytime at their tiny farm, at night sitting in the gloomy kitchen, lit by one smoky lamp—all looking straight before them, saying not a word, or when, at rare intervals, a remark was made, taking it up each in turn and solemnly repeating it." Suggestions of this uncanny family appear in more than one of Maeterlinck's early dramas.

His father intended Maeterlinck for the law, but he early demonstrated his unfitness, as well as his dislike, for this profession; and for some twenty years he has devoted himself to his real vocation. "Princess Maleine," Maeterlinck's earliest drama, was ready for publication in 1889, but no publisher welcomed it. The author was just about to pigeonhole it until a more propitious time when a friend offered to set up the manuscript in type if Maeterlinck would turn the crank of a hand press. The young poet agreed, and so it was, in a little Paris studio, that twenty-five copies of "La Princesse Maleine" were printed, and the reading world became aware of Maurice Maeterlinck.



"A new glimmer has appeared on the horizon," wrote one critic. "We cannot tell yet whether it is a rushlight or a star." But M. Octave Mirabeau proclaimed the new drama to be a work of art in such a trumpet-like article in the *Figaro* that M. Maeterlinck became famous almost over night. He continued his hermit-like existence, however, living on very little, for his earnings were small, reading insatiably, working according to the truth that was in him, undisturbed by the adulation of his admirers or the opposition of his relatives, who were scandalized at seeing the "respectable name of Maeterlinck" on the title page of a book.

The plays following upon "La Princesse Maleine" were all more or less in the same vein. In all of them there is a weird, compelling, death-haunted gloom, mysterious presences felt rather than seen, and terrifying in the extreme. The characters are ghostly little creatures consumed by ardent souls, swung and jerked by Destiny, impotently battling against a chaos of terrors. In all these dramas one sees the disquiet of Maeterlinck's mind at this period of his work. He himself calls attention to this trait in his early dramas in the essay called "The Evolution of Mystery."

"The keynote of these little plays is dread of the unknown that surrounds us. I . . . seemed to believe in a species of monstrous, invisible, fatal power that gave heed to our every action, and was hostile to our smile, to our life, to our peace and our love. Its intentions could not be divined, but the spirit of the dramas assumed them to be malevolent always. . . . This unknown would most frequently appear in the shape of death. . . . The problem of existence was answered by the enigma of annihilation. . . . And around it were only poor, trembling, elementary creatures, who shivered for an instant and wept on the brink of a gulf, and their words and their

tears had importance only from the fact that they fell into this gulf and were at times so resonant there as to lead one to believe that the gulf must be vast if tear or word as it fell could send forth so confused and muffled an echo." But these little dramas, of which M. Maeterlinck speaks almost condescendingly, have arrested the attention of the world.

Soon after the publication of the "Three Little Dramas for Marionettes" new influences came into Maeterlinck's life, making him less of a pessimist and less of a recluse at one and the same time. He fell in love, and he became interested in what science has discovered with regard to man's origin.

He wrote "Monna Vanna" for Mme. Georgette Leblanc, and to her he dedicated his first volumes of essays, "Treasure of the Humble," (1896,) and "Wisdom and Destiny," (1898). Here we find the first hints of the optimism that has characterized his later work. Man is no longer alone in his battle against Destiny; Love and Wisdom are ranged on his side. The saving power of love is shown most clearly in "Joyzelle" and "Sister Beatrice," but all the later essays and dramas are instinct with hope.

The Maeterlincks live in summer in the Norman Abbey of St. Wandrille, and in winter at Grasse, on the shores of the Mediterranean. In appearance M. Maeterlinck shows his Flemish ancestry—a man of solid muscles and sturdy build, broad-shouldered, full-fleshed, placid and serene, he suggests the country gentleman rather than the poet of mysteries and wonders. He has blue eyes and silver-gray hair and a sudden smile that makes his face boyish.

Mr. Herbert Trench has called "The Blue Bird" a "transcendental pantomime"; a fairy play into

which has been breathed a universal idea, "a light and delicate fancy playing rainbow like over the deeps of Fate and Time."

Those who find in Maeterlinck a poetic prophet discover in "The Blue Bird" a whole philosophy of life. Those who consider him a charming dreamer rather than a profound or revolutionary thinker are content to take the play as a *conte bleu*, to be enjoyed rather than analyzed. Others, still, feel that the wealth of imagery in "The Blue Bird," while not forming a basis for philosophical discussion, yet contains a quaint and charming allegory, the recognition of which enhances one's enjoyment of the play.

The essence of a parable is that it shall mean many things to many minds, like that greatest of all symbols — the writing in the sand — which all who bent to read deciphered differently. Moreover, Maeterlinck, in common with all mystics, prefers to leave the truth veiled. All true poets, he says, should be taken as meaning more than they themselves know. "Woe to him if he has been able to hold his work in control betwixt his two hands." And again: "Let us not try to frame laws out of the fragments picked up in the darkness that encompasses our thoughts." "'Twas a little being of mystery like every one else," the old King Ärkel says of the dead Mélisande; and so it is that Maeterlinck loves to depict his characters, their actions "obscurely rooted in things unexplained."

While not attempting, therefore, to imprison the inner significance of this fairy tale, one may cite certain passages in Maeterlinck's other works which, like sign posts, may point the way to the meaning of "The Blue Bird."

Tyltyl and Mytyl are more nearly flesh and blood children than any that Maeterlinck has previously depicted, and they are, besides, Boy and Girl in a vivid and delightful fashion; but aside from their vigorous



and charming individuality they are undoubtedly intended to typify the Soul of Man on its endless quest for the answer to the riddle in the midst of which we have our being. The Blue Bird itself represents that great Unknown and Unknowable that has beckoned and eluded the mind of man since the beginning of conscious life. Our happiness, M. Maeterlinck says, depends upon our conception of this great Unknown; and so, as a convenient catch phrase, we may call the Blue Bird the Secret of Happiness. It may be quite as well called the Secret of Nature or of the Universe, or the Riddle of the Sphinx. At all events it is the great Unattainable for which Man seeks because he is Man, which he has sought since the beginning of the world and will seek to the end of Time.

In this great quest, as symbolized in "The Blue Bird," we find Man all alone against everything in the world. Nature, Animals, Elements, all combine to hide away from Man the answer to the enigma. Only Light—who may be called Wisdom or Science or even Love—is ranged on the side of Man, Light and the Dog, who has made an alliance with Man through love. Maeterlinck's work from the very beginning has been full of this solitary struggle of Man; but the closest analogy to the play's half-humorous treatment of the theme is in "Our Friend the Dog."

"We are alone, absolutely alone on this chance planet, and, amid all the forms of life that surround us not one, excepting the dog, has made an alliance with us. . . . In the world of plants we have dumb and motionless slaves, but they serve us in spite of themselves, and, so soon as we lose sight of them, they hasten to betray us and return to their former wild and mischievous liberty. . . . Among the animals we number a few servants who have submitted only through indifference, cowardice or stupidity. . . . I do not speak of the cat, to whom we

are nothing more than a too large and uneatable prey—the ferocious cat, whose sidelong contempt tolerates us only as encumbering parasites in our own homes. She, at least, curses us in her mysterious heart, but all the others live beside us as they might live beside a rock or a tree. . . . And if, tomorrow, leaving their feelings toward us untouched, nature were to give them the intelligence and the weapons wherewith to conquer us, I confess I should distrust the hasty vengeance of the horse, the obstinate reprisals of the ass and the maddened meekness of the sheep. I should shun the cat as I should shun the tiger, and even the good cow, solemn and somnolent, would inspire me with but a wary confidence. As for the hen, with her round, quick eye, as when discovering a worm, I am sure she would devour me without a thought.”

It was not a long step for the man who could write this, who, in looking at the bees, said to himself: “If we were bees regarding men how would it all appear,” who saw in a lamp not a mere Thing but a Personality “driving away the dark”—to imagine Tytyl’s diamond, which should render visible to others the world he himself has always seen.

Once having turned the diamond M. Maeterlinck carries to play with the creatures whose souls he has evoked, and charming play it is, but it is always kept carefully incidental to the main thread of the Quest. The most striking incidents of the play are concerned with the “two great mysteries”—Death, and Destiny or predestination.

That the dead have a real and powerful existence in the inner life of their descendants, and that their souls are as the perfumes of flowers or the song of birds—these are thoughts that continually appear in the essays.

In the scene of the Kingdom of Night we find M.

Maeterlinck's early beliefs and fears most amusingly played upon by his later optimism. It has been said that in all Maeterlinck's early plays there is an unknown horror behind the closed door—always "a mystery going on behind a barrier, a door, a window, a wall; some obstacle or concealment beyond which something is happening, from which some one is to come. The barrier may be a real door or a wall of mystery and misunderstanding."

In the Kingdom of Night these Evils and Terrors are given very tangibly behind visible doors, that Man, with the new boldness which, M. Maeterlinck says, is the present attitude of Man in the face of mystery, throws open—only to find that science has terrified the Terrors into mere shadows of themselves, more fearful of Man than feared by him. Only a few of the mysteries, "great crouching things without eyes," are still feared by Man, still guarded by the giant Silence.

In the Kingdom of the Future we see the little unborn souls approaching life like "actors upon a stage, each with his part written out in advance from cover to cover." This sense of absolute fatality suggests M. Maeterlinck's earlier rather than his later work; but his later hope may be embodied in the fact that it is the little unborn souls themselves that build up their future lives.

"Who is dreaming—is it I?" asks Tytyl of Light in the end.

"Perhaps it is I," she answers. "What does one know of it all?"

And so with a final beckoning to the mystery that is "just behind us, just before us, all about us," the children are sent back to the real world.

And it was at home that Tytyl found the Blue Bird after all. In Maeterlinck's words: "At the very center of our being" we bear "the equal of the greatest

mysteries." But Tytyl was never quite sure that it was the true Blue Bird, for it is not in our consciousness but in our "unconsciousness" that "the general secret of life lies hidden.

When the Bird escapes from his fumbling fingers Tytyl is confident of capturing it again. "There is nothing mad in supposing that the secret . . . lies hidden within us, or around us, within reach of our hand" and that "a mere nothing . . . will be enough to give an infallible and exact sense to our immense presentiments." Meanwhile "it is enough that we should be conscious of the greatness of our expectations . . . for we are in . . . the ardent and marvelous state of life, the fairest period of happiness, its youth, its childhood."



PROTRAITS  
OF THE  
CHARACTERS  
IN THE  
PRODUCTION  
OF  
"THE BLUE BIRD"  
FROM  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY  
BANGS  
NEW YORK



"DADDY TYL"



“MUMMY TYL”



“TYLTYL” AND “MYTYL”





"FAIRY BÉRYLUNE"



“BREAD”



“FIRE”



"TYLO," THE DOG





"TYLETTE," THE CAT



“WATER”



“MILK”



“SUGAR”





“LIGHT”



“GRANNY TYL”



"GAFFER TYL"



"NIGHT"















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